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**DISCOVERIES OF LATE IRON AGE AND ROMAN  
DATE AT FARLEIGH COURT GOLF COURSE,  
NEAR WARLINGHAM**

1995

**SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD  
SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**

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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT**

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FARLEIGH COURT GOLF COURSE,  
NEAR WARLINGHAM**

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Kajima UK Engineering Ltd

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## **DISCOVERIES OF LATE IRON AGE AND ROMAN DATE AT FARLEIGH COURT GOLF COURSE, NEAR WARLINGHAM**

The Farleigh Court Golf Course occupies a very large area north of Farleigh Court itself (fig. 1). The original proposals for the Golf Course involved the disturbance of considerable areas of the site by cutting into the ground: the quantity of cut was subsequently reduced, but in view of the extensive topsoil stripping proposed even where cut was not to occur, archaeological remains (if and where they existed) over most of the area could be regarded as at risk.

An evaluation prior to the grant of planning permission was originally recommended by Dr Bird (Principal Archaeologist, Surrey County Council), but Tandridge District Council decided to grant planning permission subject to the implementation of an archaeological scheme of working. The Surrey County Archaeological Unit was engaged to prepare and carry out an appropriate scheme of work (to be approved by Tandridge District Council as advised by Dr Bird).

In brief, the scheme was to consist of three stages (Assessment; Survey and Evaluation; Mitigation Strategy), with the precise form of the second and third stages to be determined by the previous stage. The first stage involved a Preliminary (essentially desk-based) Assessment of the known archaeology. As a result of this it was concluded that, in general terms, the area could be regarded as of low to moderate archaeological potential, but that this judgment should be modified by specific information relating to certain areas. The most important of these was the record of discoveries of quantities of Roman tile, and some pottery, by members of the Bourne Society, and others. This evidence did not, unfortunately, provide a basis on which to define an area of occupation, and it was therefore decided that the second stage of work needed to consist of a programme of fieldwalking, geophysical survey and trial trenching in order to establish this. Trial trench evaluation was also proposed in other limited areas, but over much of the remainder of the golf course, the primary method of further work was to be a watching brief.

Geophysical survey (by Fluxgate Magnetometer and Magnetic Susceptibility methods; undertaken by Tony Clark and Alistair Bartlett) and detailed fieldwalking of the area of the previous Roman finds did not advance the enquiry greatly (except negatively). Work moved on to trial trenching and as this began members of the Bourne Society informed SCAU that concentrations of Roman finds had been

identified within areas (outside of those of the previous Roman finds) subjected to recent ploughing. The trial trenching programme was modified to take account of this and revealed a variety of features of Late Iron Age/Early Roman and Roman date; it identified two principal areas of archaeological interest, (A and B on figure 2). Trial trenches, apart from those shown in figure 2, were excavated in the fieldwalked area, in the area of the proposed clubhouse, and in the south-eastern area of the site.

The features discovered in Area A consisted of a number of ditches pits and post holes some of which produced surface finds that showed them to be of Roman date. Of particular interest was the discovery of a large pit measuring approximately 7.5m in diameter. Partial excavation of this feature, context 33, produced numerous sherds of Roman pottery, fragments of brick and tile, bone (including three bone pins), various copper alloy and iron objects and two Roman coins. Examination of the pottery has shown a range of material dating from the 1st to the 4th century AD, but the majority of the sherds (99 of the 169 recovered) are of 3rd to 4th century date and, on the basis of the limited work undertaken, suggest the most likely date for the feature. It is hoped that formal identification of the coins recovered will be possible in the near future. Occasional finds of 1st to 4th century date were collected from the surfaces of several other features in Area A but these were too few in number to give a reliable date for the contexts from which they were recovered. Area A lay outside the line of any ground disturbance proposed during the construction of the golf course so no further archaeological work was required here.

The features discovered in Area B were similar to those found in Area A and many yielded quite frequent surface finds. Examination of this material showed it to belong to the 1st or 2nd century AD with the exception of one sherd which was of 3rd to 4th century origin. Area B lay within an area where ground disturbance was unavoidable, but to a large extent this would involve only the removal of topsoil with no cut into the surface of the natural below. It was decided, therefore, that the topsoil should be removed from Area B, using a mechanical excavator working under the control of SCAU staff, to enable a ground plan of all features to be produced. It was further decided that if a suitable strategy could be determined whereby the archaeological remains could be preserved *in situ* with minimal disturbance, further hand excavation would only be necessary where ground cutting would take place. To this end it was determined that no machinery would

run across the exposed surface of the natural and that ground beyond that which was to be cut would be re-covered with graded topsoil pushed into place from a higher level using a bulldozer.

The removal of topsoil from Area B revealed a variety of features ( figure 3) many of which were found within an enclosure ditch; this ditch followed an extremely irregular course. These features consisted principally of gullies, pits, and post holes and included two features which showed signs of *in situ* burning and may have been used as hearths. Of considerable interest was the discovery of the remains of a small structure constructed using mortared lumps of chalk, flint and greensand. This measured approximately 3m square and may have had a passage entrance along the western side. Unfortunately, as far as the archaeological team on site was concerned, the majority of these features, including the structure, lay outside the area where ground cutting would take place, and so could not be excavated. Many yielded surface finds which gave some indication of their date, however. Those lying within the cut consisted of a small number of pits and/or post holes (508, 509, 510, 537, 538, 539, 541, 544, 545, 546, 547 and 548) and part of the enclosure ditch (501). Only three of the pits/post holes (537, 541 and 545) produced any finds but such material as was forthcoming was of 1st to 2nd century date. By contrast finds, principally sherds of pottery, were quite frequent in segments excavated from the ditch (502, 527, 528, 535 and 543) and these included material which dated from the 1st century BC to the Mid 2nd century AD with the majority indicating that the feature most probably belonged to the 1st or 2nd century AD. The surface finds recovered from other features in Area B suggested that most of these features are of 1st to 2nd century date though some would appear to be of 3rd to 4th century origin.

It is not possible to make a detailed interpretation of the site in the absence of more comprehensive excavation so none will be attempted here, although when the detailed study of the material from the site is completed it may be possible to make some further suggestions. The small structure remains particularly intriguing. This was too small to have been a building in the conventional sense, but suggestions for its purpose have not been readily forthcoming. Most likely amongst those offered to date may be that it was the base of a tower, or that it was used for a burial. The feature clearly cut, so is later in date than, the enclosure ditch, but very few finds were recovered when it was trowelled over at surface level. Those that were recovered were of non-specific Roman date.

Following the completion of this work the development area was visited on frequent occasions during construction as part of the watching brief. This led to the discovery of a number of additional features close to Areas A and B, the most interesting of which were around twelve to fifteen cremation burials (fig 2 ). These consisted of quantities of burnt bone and charcoal, sometimes but not always contained in vessels (though where present only the bases of these survived), in small, usually shallow, pits. The fills of these features were retained as soil samples and this will be sent for examination by a specialist in due course. Finds recovered from the cremations suggest that the site may have been used as a cemetery over a period between the 1st century BC/1st century AD and into the 2nd century AD - this might indicate that it was of long-lasting religious importance. Some of the burials contained grave goods, an example of which is a copper alloy bracelet provisionally dated to the 1st or 2nd century AD. The remaining features discovered at this stage were pits, post holes and stretches of ditch or gully which could only be traced over short distances. Those which could be dated, mainly on the evidence provided by surface finds, appeared to be predominantly of 1st to 2nd century AD date.

Approximately 1700 sherds of pottery have been recovered from the work undertaken at Farleigh Court - this is a considerable number as relatively little detailed excavation took place and many of these finds were collected from the surfaces of unexcavated contexts. The provisional examination of this material has concluded that the assemblage is of importance due to the relatively large number of closely dated groups covering the transition from the Late Iron Age to the Early Roman period. The pottery includes not only Iron Age forms and fabrics, but also Roman forms in Iron Age fabrics before moving into Roman forms in Roman fabrics. The recognition and study of such material is essential for tracing the relationship between the indigenous Iron Age peoples and the incoming Roman ideas/peoples. It is also important to note that there is a paucity of cemetery sites in Surrey so the study of the remains from Farleigh Court will be of great interest.

The construction of the golf course is now at an advanced stage and it seems unlikely that further significant discoveries will be made.

Graham N Hayman  
Field Officer  
Surrey County Archaeological Unit

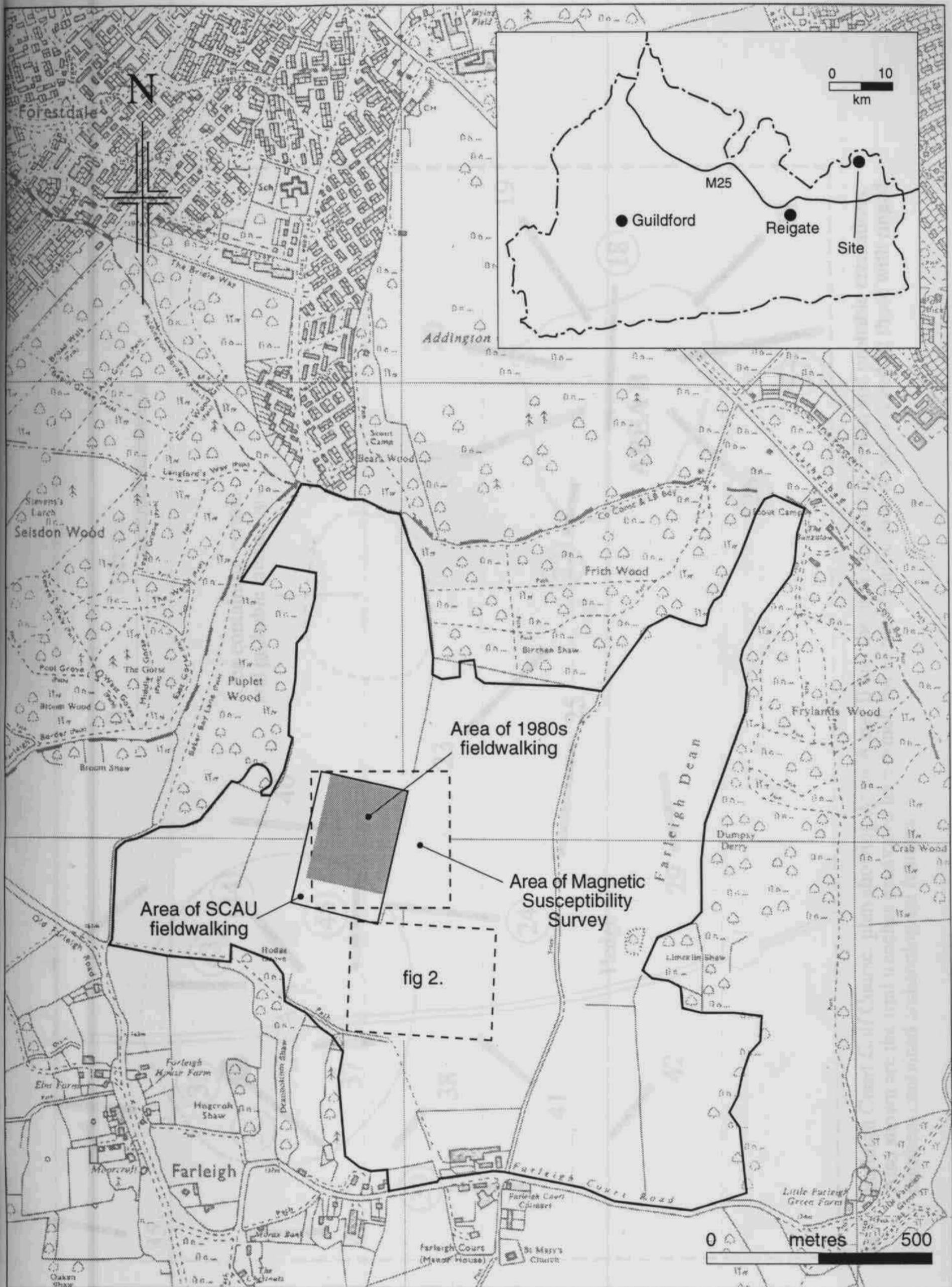


fig 1. Farleigh Court Golf Course: An extract from the 1:10,000 Ordnance Survey map showing the area occupied by the Golf Course and the areas covered by the archaeological work described in this report

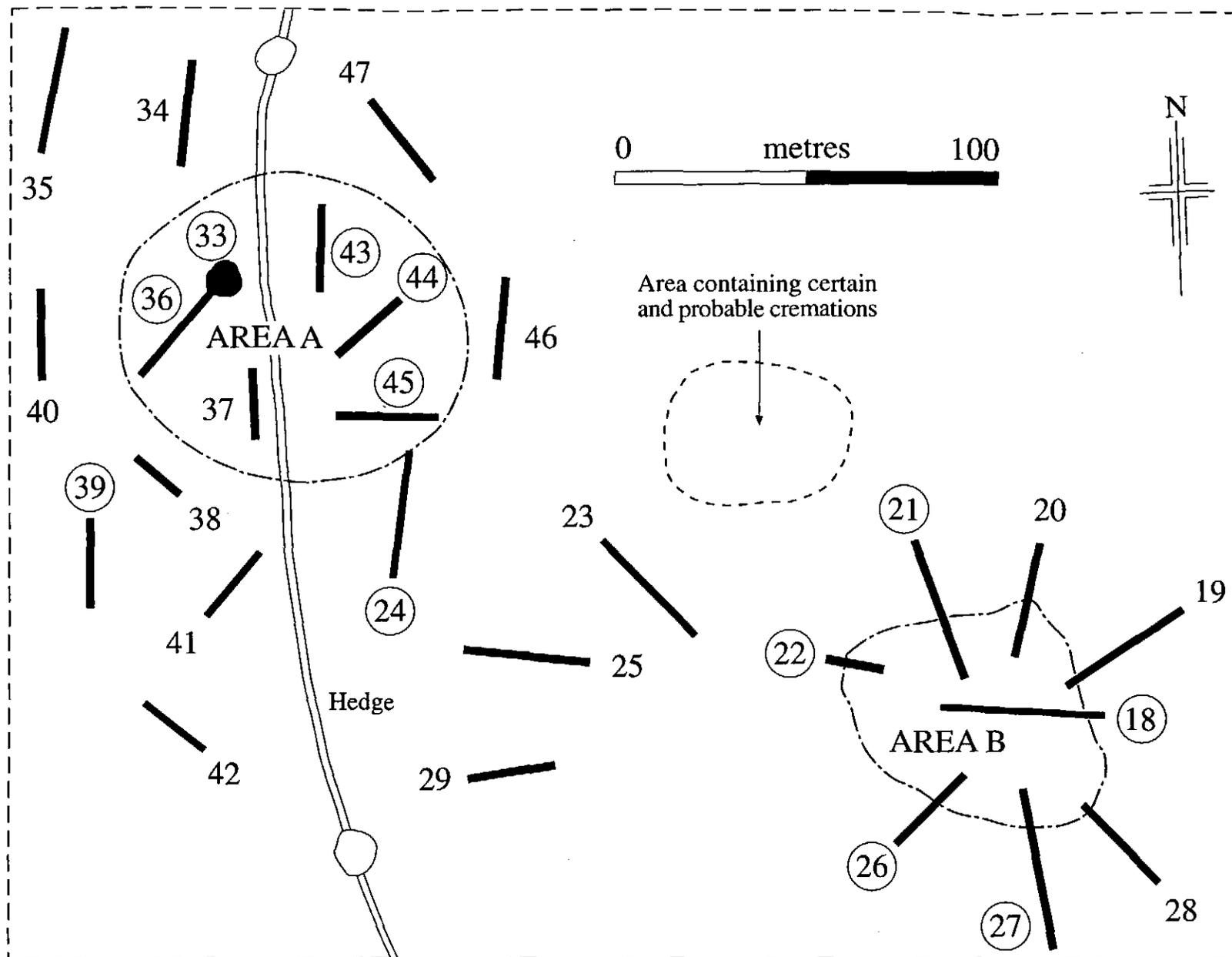


fig 2. Farleigh Court Golf Course: plan showing Areas A and B and the area containing certain and probable cremations. Also shown are the trial trenches excavated here which led to the identification of areas A and B: those with ringed numbers contained archaeological features.

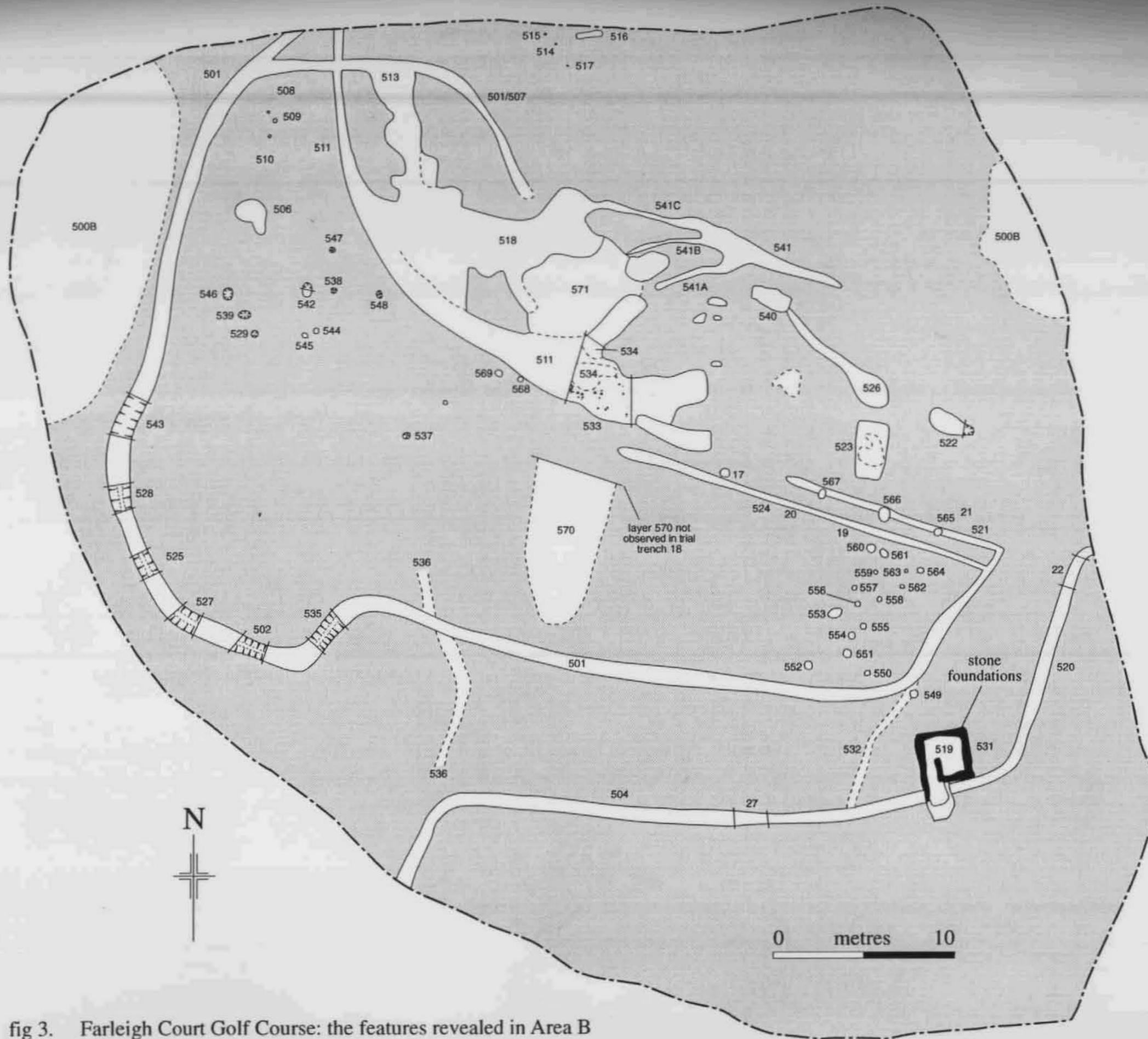


fig 3. Farleigh Court Golf Course: the features revealed in Area B